(c) The Task Force comprises experts from diverse fields and is mandated to examine various facets of the evolving *Global Strategic Development* and their implications for India.

(d) The constitution and selection of the Task Force has been approved by the Prime Minister. The tenure of the Members is for a period of six months from the date of their first meeting or so for such extended period as the Government may determine. The National Security Council Secretariat is servicing the Task Force.

NDC meeting

3311. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently held National Development Council meeting has decided to set up a sub-committee to look into the debt relief to States;

(b) what are the other divisions that have been taken with regard to Ministry of Agriculture;

(c)whether it is also a fact that the NDC has opined for increasing the cash component in the Food-for Work programme; and

(d)if so, the details thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) National Development Council in its meeting held on 27th & 28th June, 2005 decided to set up a committee under the Finance Minister to examine relevant issues relating to the debt burden of States and debt relief with reference to their debt outstandings against the National Small Saving Fund (NSSF). The Committee has already been constituted on 16th September, 2005 under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance.

(b) Recognizing the fact that agriculture and irrigation have-been a common theme in the interventions of the Chief Ministers, and that rejuvenating the agricultural credit system, providing some measure of relief to farmers, improving the quality of extension work, attending to the specific needs and problems of dry lands and wastelands and enhancing investments in irrigation have emerged as common concerns, the NDC agreed to form a sub-Committee for drawing up implementable action plans in agriculture and related issues. The Sub-committee has already been

set up on 25th August, 2005 under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Agriculture Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

(c) and (d) On the Employment Guarantee Act, the suggestions that payment of wages should be mostly in cash since there were problems in movement of foodgrains to backward areas and that being a self-targeting programme, the Employment Guarantee should cover non-BPL families were noted by the NDC, and it was directed to consider them for inclusion in the final draft of the National Employment Guarantee Bill which has since already been passed by the Parliament.

Amendment in proportion of assistance to States

†3312. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the basis of granting 70 per cent loan and 30 per cent grants to States;

(b) whether the State Governments have sought an amendment in this proportion; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and by when a decision is likely to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Central Assistance for Annual Plans of States released as loans and grants for various projects/schemes comprises of Normal Central Assistance (NCA), Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) and ACA for Special and Other Programmes. Allocation of NCA is based on the Gadgil Formula as approved by the National Development Council (NDC) in December, 1991 in the Loan: Grant ratio of 10:90 for Special Category States and 70:30 for Non Special Category States. The allocation of ACA for Eaps and ACA for Special and Other Programmes are based on the specific guidelines. The release of NCA in the form of loans and grants in the ratio of 70:30 to Non Special Category States is based on the relative composition of Plan expenditure in terms of Capital and Revenue components and the resource position of the States as well as that of the Centre.

(b) and (c) Consequent upon the formation of the new UPA Government, the Planning Commission initiated Regional Meetings with Chief Ministers of States under the Chairmanship of Deputy Chairman, Planning

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.